

MEETING LOG

CPSC 6-11
11/30/95
Products
Exempt
Firm
Comments

Subject: Meeting With Shopping Cart and Seat Belt Manufacturers on Seat Belts and Warning Signs on Shopping Carts

Meeting Date: November 9, 1995

Place: CPSC, Conference Room 714, Bethesda, Maryland

Source: Walt A. Sanders, Counselor to the Chairman

CPSC Reps: Chairman Ann Brown, Walt Sanders (COAB), Barbara Jacobson (EPHS), Bill Zamula (EC), Jacquie Elder (EXHIR), Harleigh Ewell (OGC), Dennis Wilson (COMG), Patsey Semple (COMG)

Industry Reps: John Ondrasik, VP, Precision Wire Products, Inc.
Russ Begley, President, UNARCO
Victor Grimm, Corporation Counsel, Unarco
Alan Kern, President, Rehrig International, Inc.
Gary Wood, President, Smart Products Inc.
Paul Giampavolo, President, Safe Strap Company, Inc.
Diane Sipp, Safe Strap Company, Inc.
Lou Yolich, Customer Service Representative, Technibilt (speaker phone) Matthew Carston, Pres. United Steel & Wire
Meg Farrage, International Mass Retailers Association

Press: Christopher Barton, Product Safety Letter

Summary of Meeting:

Chairman Brown explained the role, mission and function of the Commission. Relying upon CPSC data on shopping cart-related injuries, she requested industry representatives to voluntarily equip all new shopping carts with seat belts and warning labels. Chairman Brown asked the industry to develop a timetable to take action on her proposal. She then turned the meeting over to Jacquie Elder who presented an overview of the problem. Barbara Jacobson explained the NEISS system to describe how CPSC collected the shopping cart injury data and summarized the incident data for the period 1985-1994. Walt Sanders discussed CPSC's previous activities regarding shopping cart injuries, including action taken on the January 1994 De Stefano petition. He also discussed CPSC's ongoing involvement with the Food marketing Institute (FMI), and the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG). Sanders distributed a November 1, 1995 FMI letter reflecting its agreement to conduct a "high profile" public relations campaign to promote seat belt use. He also distributed Chairman Brown's letter requesting NAAG to adopt a national policy to encourage individual manufacturers to equip all new carts with safety belts.

Sanders told the industry that CPSC had requested individual state attorney general offices to encourage companies to cooperate with CPSC.

Several industry representatives said that their experience reflected fewer injuries to children. Some offered to share their data with CPSC. One manufacturer suggested that CPSC revised the data estimates to see what injuries we could really address (i.e. incidents in carts where belts were not available). All agreed seat belt usage has increased over the past decade. Other industry observations included: (1) The shopping cart manufacturers have limited leverage with their customers. It is important for CPSC to obtain the cooperation of the retailers because the seat belts must be maintained and shoppers must be educated to buckle their children up; (2) The Texas and New York consent decrees (requiring manufacturers to equip all carts sold in those states with safety belts and warning signs) have been problematic - the retailers often refused to pay the additional costs and the burden of enforcement fell on the cart manufacturers; (3) Seat belts permanently installed in carts pose sanitation, durability and maintenance problems; (4) The failure of retail stores to maintain and replace seat belts poses a potential liability problems for manufacturers of cart seat belts; (5) Retail stores have also expressed resistance (and opposition) to purchasing shopping carts equipped with safety belts, because they wanted to supply their own belts; (6) Some retailers have failed to install seat belts even when they were provided free of charge by a sponsor; (6) There was general agreement among the manufacturers that a uniform warning signs and minimum standards for seat belts would be useful; (7) Retailers do not always order new carts with warning signs and signs would be an additional expense for some retailers.

Several industry representatives said that a vigorous information and education program would be essential to promote increased safety belt usage. Industry representatives stressed that retail store cooperation and locational demographics are critical factors in determining safety belts need or effectiveness. The International Mass Retail Association requested that CPSC review a study by Wal-Mart Stores on the effective use of safety belts in shopping carts (Wal-Mart currently equips all carts with safety belts and warning signs).

Industry representatives agreed to provide Chairman Brown with written recommendations by November 30 on (1) how CPSC should structure its program to reduce shopping cart injuries; and , (2) how individual companies could make a contribution to that effort. CPSC staff said they would work closely with industry to arrive at an equitable solution.